REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants thank the examiner for indicating Claim 8 is patentable. Claim 8 has been rewritten in independent form and should be in condition for immediate allowance.

Pending Claims 1 through 7, 9 through 13, and 16 through 18 stand rejected as unpatentable over newly cited reference Saidla U.S. Patent No. 3,854,620 considered in combination with Lynn et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,093,481 and Day U.S. Patent No. 5,589,243, or in combination with Johannsen U.S. Patent No. 3,964,354 and Hansen U.S. Patent No. 5,870,965.

Saidla discloses that to enhance bonding, the foam core should be sanded before applying the outer skin. There is no recognition or suggestion in Saidla that sanding the core would necessarily create an open layer of cells. An open layer of cells is not inherently present in Saidla because there is no teaching or suggestion as to how long and to what extent the core should be sanded. There is no suggestion to create an open layer of cells. There is no teaching or suggestion that an open layer of cells would possibly be created under ideal sanding conditions.

It is readily apparent that Saidla does not contemplate creating an open layer of cells on the foam core. Rather, Saidla discloses that the core's surface should be roughened to enhance bonding. For example, Saidla also discloses that to enhance bonding the core can be chilled to provide a friable surface. Similar to sanding, a friable surface creates a crumpled or roughened surface to enhance bonding by providing more contact area between the core and the skin. In contrast, skiving the core creates an open layer of cells in which the resin or adhesive flows to create a mechanical lock between the core and skins.

Furthermore, Saidla is directed to a container structure having fiberglass inner and outer skins and a polyurethane foam core located between the skins. There is no teaching or suggestion in the cited references that polyurethane foam has similar bonding characteristics as polypropylene. There is no suggestion or teaching in any of the cited references to skive the core.

It is respectfully submitted that all of pending Claims 1 through 13 and 16 through 18 are now in condition for immediate allowance and an early notification of the allowability of these

claims is earnestly solicited. If any matters remain to resolved, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned attorney by telephone at 704-444-1021 to expedite prosecution of this application.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy J. Balts
Registration No. 51,429

Customer No. 00826
ALSTON & BIRD LLP
Bank of America Plaza
101 South Tryon Street, Suite 4000
Charlotte, NC 28280-4000
Tel Charlotte Office (704) 444-1000
Fax Charlotte Office (704) 444-1111
CLT01/4613777v1

CERTIFICATION OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this paper is being facsimile transmitted to the US Patent and Trademark Office at Fax No. 703-872-9310 on the date shown below.

Grace R. Rippy

October 8, 2003
Date